

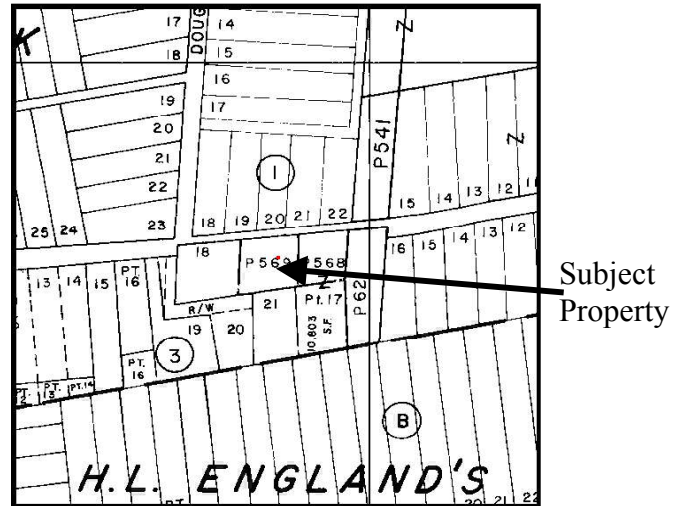
**CITY OF ROCKVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

**January 15, 2004
MEETING NO. 01-2004**

APPLICATION: HDC03-00278

DATE FILED: December 10 & 29 2003

**APPLICANT/
OWNER:** Nick Collins
305 Lincoln Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850



PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:

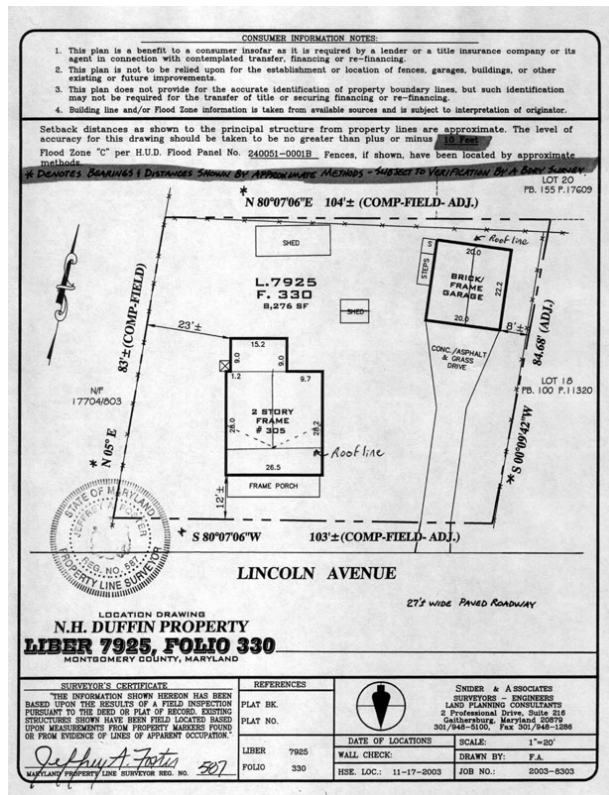
The subject property, a single-family residence known as the "Reuben Hill House", faces north on Lincoln Avenue in the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Rockville. The property includes the two-story dwelling built on pier footers, a two-story garage, a one-story rectangular shed, and a one-story square shed. The house sits close to the street, and the rectangular shed and garage are both at the back of the property. The driveway is located in the west side yard. The property is relatively flat, and the perimeter is enclosed with a chain-link fence. The property originally included a deeper backyard, but this was subdivided off from the historic property in the recent past and new homes have been built there.



Front and East elevations of house



Front and East elevations of garage



Site Plan

PREVIOUS ACTIONS AT THIS ADDRESS:

BLD94-00693 Request for fence
Approved 5/94
HDC2002-00081 Historic Designation
Approved 2002

REQUEST: The Applicant requests a Certificate of Approval for the following:

Site work:

- Remove 4 existing trees (walnut, mulberry, box elder, maple);
- Plant 3 or 4 new trees (paper birch, black walnut, black cherry);
- Remove existing deteriorated concrete/asphalt driveway; and
- Install pea gravel drive, with decorative pavers for edging, including gravel path to garage side steps.
- Plant a variety of shrubs around the perimeter, along the existing fence line (species undetermined at this point).

Renovation work at the garage:

- Replace existing pipe railing with painted wood rail, built to code;
- Replace 6 existing deteriorated 6/6 double-hung windows (sash only) with new thermally glazed 1/1 wood windows;
- Replace 2 existing deteriorated 6/6 double-hung windows (sash and frames) with new thermally glazed 1/1 wood windows;
- Replace deteriorated existing bathroom multi-light awning window with wood awning single-light window.
- Replace existing side-entry doors with ½ light paneled exterior doors (either wood, or steel).
- Add 3 flat skylights to garage roof.

Initial renovation work at the House:

Replace 3 existing 2/2 wood windows in the 2nd story “sleeping porch” with new wood windows. The unit would be designed to read as three individual windows, but would be composed of three sliding glass units with integral muntins, attached to read as 2/2. This would provide the option of moving large items to the 2nd floor from the exterior that can’t be brought up the existing interior stairs.

1. *Historic, archeological, or architectural value and significance of the site or structure and its relationship to the historic, archeological, or architectural significance of the surrounding area.*

The home predates the 1891 subdivision of Lincoln Park by William W. Welsh. Reuben Hill (1832 – 1916) was a former slave of the Stonestreet family. He obtained this property in 1880 and built the earliest portion of the house (the west side of the house) soon after. Subsequent additions to the house (adding two rooms on the east side, adding a 2nd story, and adding the full-width front porch) have been dated to ca. 1917. The house was owned at the time by Reuben Hill’s son, Reuben Thomas Hill, who was recognized as a skilled carpenter.

All of the outbuildings are 20th century, reflecting the local economy for the African-American community of Lincoln Park. This included many home-based businesses and accessory apartments. For example, the garage was used for an automobile repair shop. The African-American community in Lincoln Park was essentially ignored in the past by County and City government, in terms of inspections and permitting. The accessory housing units were often created to help family members and make up for the deficiency in housing opportunities. As such, the outbuildings exemplify local 20th century conditions at a site whose initial significance lies in the mid to late 19th century.

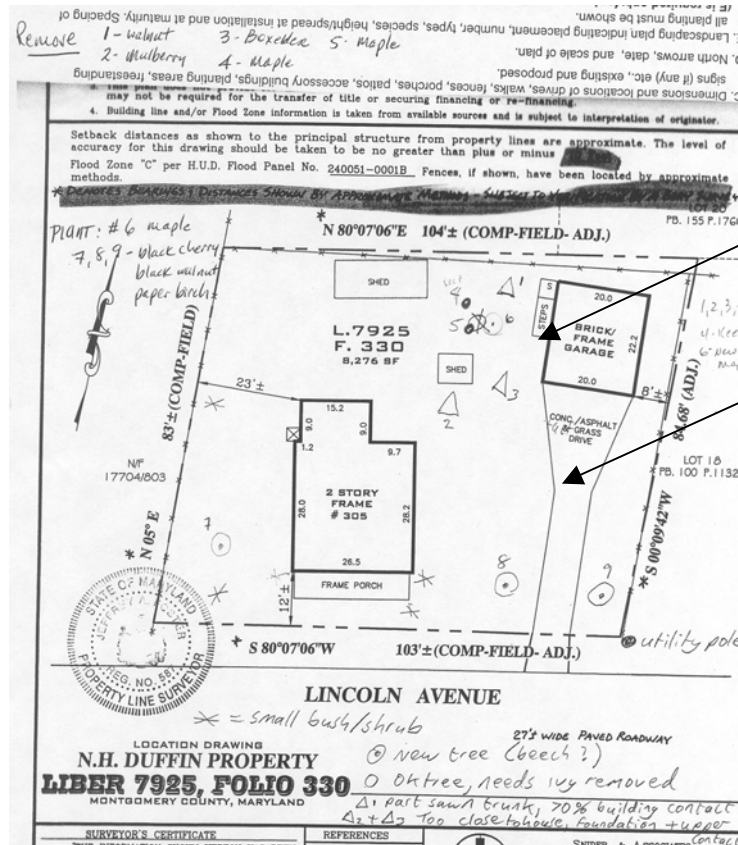
The house was occupied continuously by members of the Hill family up to December 2003, at which time the current owner and applicant purchased the property. It was designated as a local historic site in 2002 with the Hill family’s support.

2. *The relationship of the exterior architectural features of the structure to the remainder of the entire structure and to the surrounding area.*

The applicant proposes to do some immediate landscaping and renovate the garage structure, addressing the most pressing problems. Several of the trees proposed to be removed are in the back yard. The garage was built at the back of the lot in the west side yard. Preliminary work at the house is restricted to a request to replace three aged but non-original windows on the sleeping porch of the house.

Landscape

The Driveway is proposed to be resurfaced with pea gravel, removing the existing remnants of concrete and asphalt. To help retain the gravel in the drive, the applicant wishes to install an edge of decorative concrete pavers, to be installed at grade. A short gravel path would be extended from the driveway to the steps to the garage. Public Works at the City strongly discourages the use of pea gravel, preferring asphalt or concrete, except in exceptional cases. In that case, a concrete apron would be required, at a minimum.



Add pea gravel path to garage steps.

Replace broken asphalt/concrete drive with pea gravel edged with dark red/buff concrete pavers.

Trees

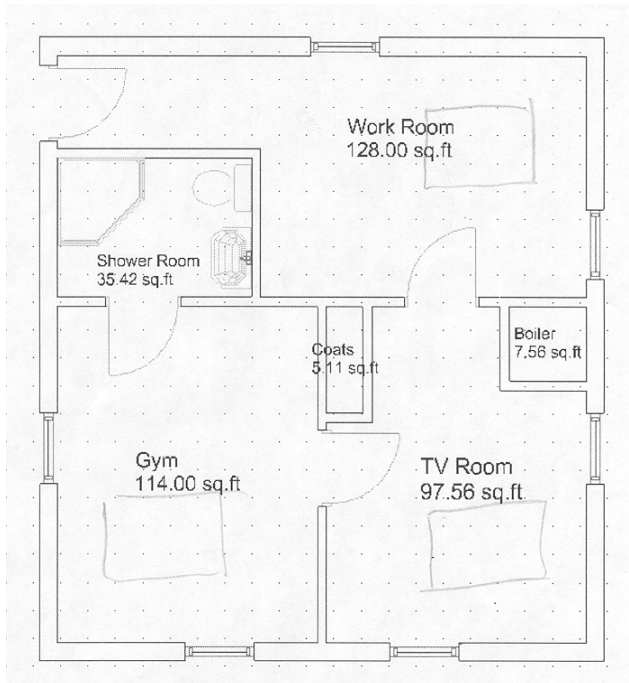
- 1 Remove Walnut
- 2 Remove Mulberry
- 3 Remove Box elder
- 4 Retain Maple
- 5 Remove Maple
- 6 Add Maple
- 7 Add Black Walnut
- 8 Add Black Cherry
- 9 Add Paper Birch

The trees proposed for removal are in the west-rear yard area, and in the general vicinity of the garage entry steps. The trunk of the walnut (#1 on site plan) has been partially sawn through by the prior owner. The maple tree (#5) is in poor condition and is being choked out by ivy. The mulberry tree (#2) and the box elder (#3) are considered undesirable trees according to the City Forester, and both of them encroach on existing buildings. The one healthy maple tree (#4, towards the rear of the property) will be saved and the applicant would like permission to plant another tree (probably a maple) in this area east of the garage steps. In addition, the applicant proposes to plant a new tree (probably walnut) in the east side yard, and one or two trees on either side of the driveway (black cherry and paper birch).

Other landscaping work envisioned in the future includes planting a variety of shrubs along the perimeter fencing.

Garage

The doors and windows of the garage appear to have been scavenged from other buildings and reused at this site. Evidence of this is the fact that sashes don't close tightly together, and that frames vary in some instances.



Garage Plan – Proposed skylight locations



Interior view of garage window on N elevation



2nd story garage entry door



1st Floor Garage entry door

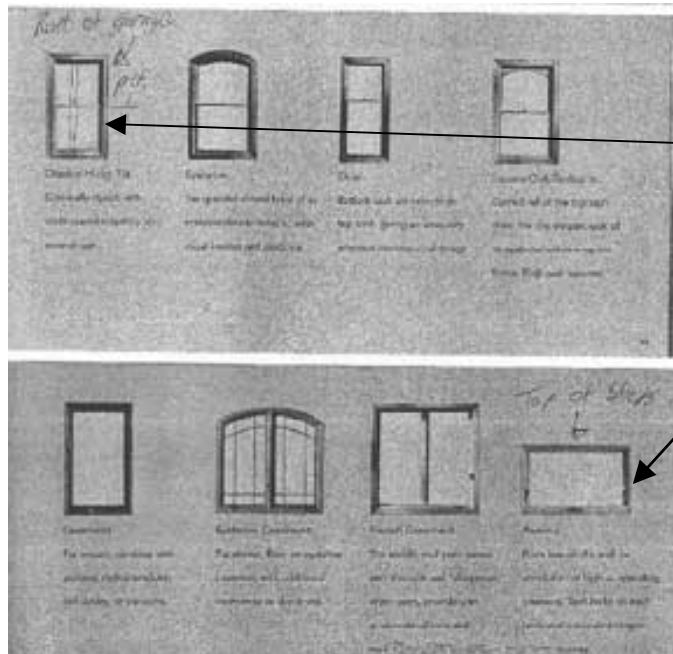
The existing entry door on the 2nd floor has a bottom vent, making it less than ideal as an outside door. The entry door on the ground floor is very narrow, and a custom door may be necessary.

The applicant proposes to retain all the existing door and window openings on the garage (and retain the existing interior plan), but would prefer to install new thermally glazed wood windows, and doors. After close inspection of the condition of the sash and frames, he proposes to replace only the sashes on the upper floor, but replace sashes and frames on the two ground floor windows. The existing windows are 6/6 wood windows that appear to have been scavenged from another location. This recycling of building materials is common, and a recommended way to extend the life of historic materials. At this point, with no maintenance for an extended period of time, the windows are in poor condition.



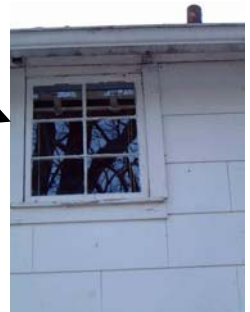
Existing 6/6 garage window

Weathershield wood windows

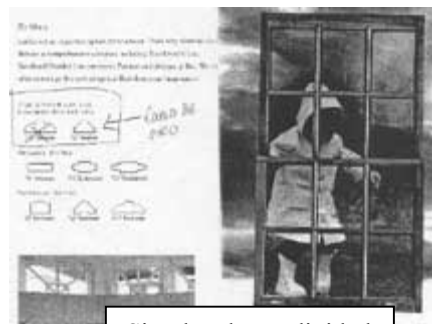


Proposed replacements for garage. Could be 2/2 or 6/6 but applicant prefers 1/1 for additional light.

Proposed replacement for existing 6-light bathroom garage window. Awning window could be 6-light, but applicant prefers 1-light.



While the existing windows are 6/6, the applicant would prefer to install 1/1 wood windows. This would provide more interior light as the window openings are small.



Simulated true-divided light wood window

1/1 wood windows



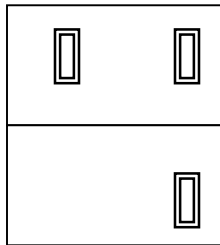
Steel Door



Wood Door

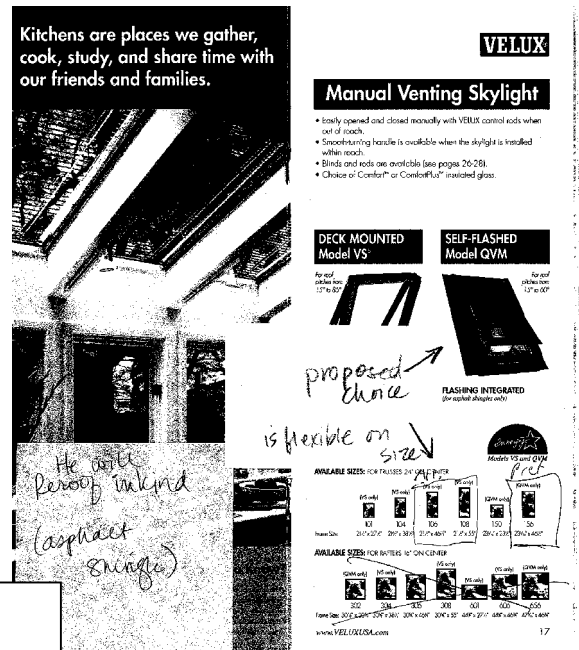
For the new doors, the applicant would agree to either a 1/2-light metal door, or a 1/2-light wood door. Both would be painted, and neither is highly visible from the street.

Garage roof plan with
proposed new skylights



House

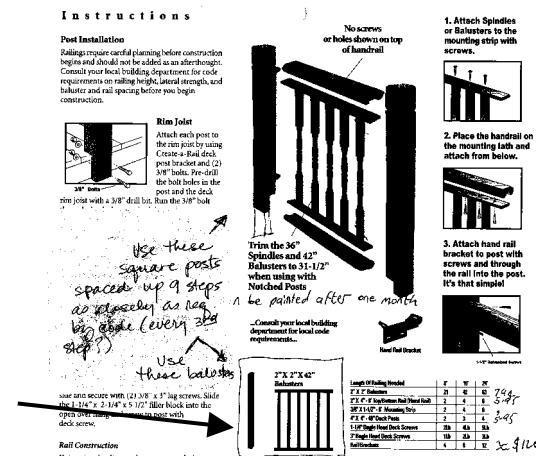
Street



The existing will be replaced with a painted wood railing with very simple rectangular pickets. This new railing will meet code requirements, without being too decorative and therefore out of place on this simple garage structure.



Existing pipe railing

Proposed wood
picket

Finally, although no HDC approval is required, the applicant wishes to inform the HDC that he will replace the existing garage asphalt roof in kind, and repair the existing ground floor sliding garage doors, or replace them in kind by making doors to match the existing.

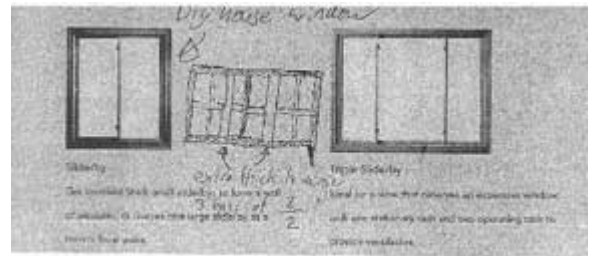


House

The applicant anticipates a lot of interior work on the house, leveling out-of-kilter floors and making adjustments to previous interior alterations. The house is in stable condition at this time, with a sound roof and a recent exterior paint job. However, in anticipation of difficulties moving large furniture to the 2nd floor because of the small/narrow staircase, the applicant would like consideration of a proposal to replace the three existing windows on the east elevation of the sleeping porch with windows that would look very similar, but would operate in a different manner.



The new windows would be sliders, fabricated to look like three individual windows, but would in fact be a grouping within a single window frame. Designed to be easily removed, the large window opening could then be used to bring bedroom furniture to the 2nd story via a ladder.



Weathershield wood window

3. *The general compatibility of exterior design, scale, proportion, arrangement, texture, and materials proposed to be used.*

The applicant proposes compatible alterations to secondary features on the site. The existing garage, while significant, has substandard elements, including the steps, doors and windows. While the first choice for window replacement may be 6/6 (to replicate the existing windows), the proposed 1/1 windows would be typical of a 20th century installation. As the garage itself is more significant as part of a collection of assorted outbuildings, rather than as an example of building technology, the proposed alterations would not affect its primary significance. The proposed skylights would not be highly visible from the public right-of-way, given the side-facing location of the roof hips and the location of the garage at the back of the property. Similarly, the proposed entry door and ground floor door are on the east elevation of the garage, towards the back property line, and are not readily seen from the street. The applicant would install either the metal or the wood doors, and the HDC may have a preference.

The proposed landscaping is consistent with the neighborhood, and the trees that are proposed for removal are all fairly recent "volunteers." The HDC does not typically review garden plantings, but the applicant wished to keep the HDC informed, and hear any comments they might have on the proposed installation of shrubs along the perimeter of the property.

The proposed alterations at the house on the sleeping porch are one solution to a problem inherent in a small historic building of this type. The applicant would be removing non-original windows, although they appear to be old sash. In all likelihood, these porch windows were

scavenged from another site and used at this location when the sleeping porch was enclosed in the early part of the 20th century. It would not be atypical that sleeping porch windows were not an exact match to the house windows, although the applicant's intention is to match as closely as possible the existing conditions.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the HDC approve HDC03-00278, to renovate the existing garage, remove and plant trees as specified, repair the existing driveway and surface with pea gravel and concrete pavers as an edge, and replace three existing sleeping porch windows on the house based on the applicant's application. The HDC notes that the applicant may install ½- light metal or ½- light wood entry doors in the garage.